

SHERROD BROWN
OHIO

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AND FORESTRY
BANKING, HOUSING,
AND URBAN AFFAIRS
FINANCE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

July 26, 2023

Mr. Joseph Hinrichs
President and CEO
CSX
500 Water Street, 15th Floor
Jacksonville, FL 32202.

Mr. Hinrichs:

I am writing once again to express my concern about dilapidated rail bridges owned by CSX. Recent reporting by WKRC Local 12 has highlighted that CSX bridges in Butler County have deteriorated, some exhibiting cracks or crumbling concrete, which poses risks to travelers that pass under the bridges, and the community wants to be assured that trains will safely pass when traveling on the bridges. I request a list of all inquiries expressing concern about the condition of rail bridges from Ohio government officials and, additionally, I am requesting that CSX provide me with specifically tailored action plan for how your company will fix the bridges in Butler County and address concerns raised by the County Engineer.

Specifically, CSX's B Street overpass bridge, located in downtown Hamilton, is of concern to local residents who, along with the County Engineer and local news sources, have reported debris routinely falling from the bridge. This kind of decay, especially for a bridge in the center of a populated area, is troubling. I am also concerned that it appears that the Butler County Engineer's Office has raised concerns about multiple CSX bridges in Butler County, including the CSX bridge over Port Union Road, which CSX has failed to adequately respond to.

I am also concerned to hear that the Butler County Engineer has had a difficult time getting your company to respond to his office. The Butler County Engineer's office would not raise questions about the condition of CSX's bridges unless in his professional judgement, based on years of engineering experience, he had good reason to be concerned about these bridges. For the Butler County Engineer Greg Wilkens to publicly state that he gets the impression that the railroads

“just blatant[ly] don’t care”¹ is an indictment of your community engagement and maintenance efforts.

Time after time, I’ve heard from Ohioans across the state who are worried that old and dilapidated rail infrastructure poses a threat to local economies and to residents’ safety. In too many cases, Class 1 railroads like CSX have failed to properly maintain and repair the bridges and other rail infrastructure in Ohio, leaving local communities to deal with the consequences.

Prior requests for information on the status of your company’s bridges in Ohio and an action plan for how your company will address any needed repairs to rail bridges have resulted in an inadequate response. Simply citing the process for the public release of bridge inspection reports through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is insufficient. Adherence to the process for the release of inspection reports does not prevent your company from providing information to my office, the Butler County Engineer, and the public about deteriorated conditions and your company’s plans, if any, to undertake repairs.

At a very minimum, I request a list of all inquiries expressing concern about the condition of rail bridges from Ohio government officials, including county engineers and elected officials. I ask that CSX provide this information so that I can work with local officials and the Federal Railroad Administration to provide complete transparency to the public on the status of your company’s bridges.

I am also requesting that CSX provide a specifically tailored action plan for how your company will fix the bridges in Butler County and address concerns raised by the County Engineer. CSX is responsible for this infrastructure, and has a duty to proactively invest a fair share of revenues into properly maintaining tracks and bridges within the local communities that host your trains.

I expect a prompt and full response to the requests in this letter.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

¹ <https://local12.com/news/investigates/trouble-on-tracks-cincinnati-train-bridges-major-wear-poor-condition-difficult-find-information-butler-county-hamilton-stones-fall-falling>